

REMARKS

By the present response, Applicant has canceled claims 13 and 16 without disclaimer. Further, Applicant has amended claims 12 and 15 to further clarify the invention. Claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-25 and 27-35 remain pending in this application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, claims 12 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,640,100 (Kojima et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,434,187 (Beard et al.). Claims 1-11, 18-25 and 27-35 have been allowed. Claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 1-11, 18-25 and 27-35 and indicating that claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has complied with this suggestion and amended claims 12 and 15 with claims 13 and 16, respectively.

Serial No. **09/916,318**

Docket No. **P-0217**

Amdt. dated

Reply to Office Action of June 28, 20006

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 12 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kojima et al. in view of Beard et al. Applicant has amended claims 12 and 15 with the allowable subject matter of claims 13 and 16, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 12 and 15 are patentable over the cited references at least for these reasons.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that none of the cited references, taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 12 and 15 of the present application. Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-25 and 27-35 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of such claims is respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, Frederick D. Bailey, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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